

The Times - Dispatch

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FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 1906.

Nothing can work me damage except
myself; the harm that I sustain
I carry about with me, and
never am a real sufferer but by my
own fault.

Municipal Operation of Public Utilities.

We publish elsewhere a letter to Mr. Joseph Bryan from Mr. E. L. Demas, which gives what we take to be an authoritative statement of the terms on which the city gas works may be leased. The advantages of the offer, if so it may be called, are so far and away beyond what the city could hope to accomplish for itself that "a decent respect for the opinion of mankind" would seem to compel the City Council to take a very respectful notice of the proposition.

And yet, large as the offer apparently is, judged by the results of our municipal management of the city gas works, the offer is no greater than, nor indeed as great as, the difference between the earnest, whole-souled, intelligent and scrupulous management of an efficient body of private citizens and the lax, careless, happy-go-lucky, indifferent and ignorant management by a political organization.

The day may come, and we believe in some Utopia of the future it will come, when a municipal management of a public utility will bring here a reasonably satisfactory result, but that day is removed by generations from this.

If the purpose of municipal ownership and operation is to see how inefficiently the utility can be managed, then we are ripe for further experimentation and the expenditure of \$700,000 or \$800,000. If, however, the purpose is to do the greatest good to the greatest number, and not confine the benefits of municipal ownership to the favored few, who have their noses in the public crib, then beyond all doubt the true method is to confine public ownership with private operation.

To defy experience as well as theory is to suggest fatuity in the Council or incredible political ends.

We believe our Council, as a whole, is above the average, both in ability and character. It will not do, however, for the fatuous, though honest, to join hands with the devious, though shrewd, and dash the hopes of those who wisely have at heart only the interests of the city as a whole.

Even Chicago, upon a full discussion of the whole question of municipal ownership and operation, has voted for ownership, but has voted AGAINST operation. Certainly there is nothing in our own experience that does not confirm the wisdom of the distinction that the Chicago people have made between ownership and operation.

There is no reason to believe that a lease cannot be made which will be greatly to the advantage of the city, and take our gas works out of politics and give the city a fair return for its great property and give the people good and cheaper gas.

At least let the municipal stockholders—the people—have a say in their own matter. The most soulless corporation does this.

Struggle for Seaboard Offices.

Richmond is not alone in efforts to get the Seaboard Air Line offices. The news that those offices might be moved has spread far and has awakened in a number of Southern cities a great desire to be the home finally chosen by that railroad. Such interest manifests the real value that a city gains by being made the administrative center for a railroad. Not the least advantage is the increase in population for the coming of the general offices is often precursor of the establishment of shops with the consequent growth in manufacturing.

Railroads may be without conscience, but they are not devoid of a desire to make their managers comfortable and so the city in which the general offices are located is likely to have certain favors in the matters of schedule that would not otherwise be granted. But above all else is the question of freight rates, and this touches not only the city but the State in which the railroad is domiciled.

It is, therefore, more than pride—it is sound business sense that makes Atlanta, Savannah, Columbia, Spartanburg and Raleigh all struggle eagerly for that prize.

The same considerations should make Richmond fight to get the Seaboard offices for itself if possible, but at least to keep them in Virginia.

Henrico Finances.

The grand jury appointed to investigate the affairs of the treasurer's office reports that in its opinion the late treasurer had no wrongful intent in handling the funds of the county as he did, but thought that he was within his legal rights. Yet the grand jury found that "W. J. Todd, late treasurer, applied taxes collected by him, in part and in excess of his commissions, in his personal use and in his private business; that he loaned same to sundry individuals on his personal account and responsibility; that he placed a portion of such

funds in bank at interest and collected or claimed such interest as his personal property; and that he used funds belonging to the county to overpay the State of Virginia on account of State taxes which had not been paid and became delinquent apparently with the object of realizing personally the benefit when such taxes were paid later of the over payment by non-payment within the time required by law; and that on account of such use of the funds a deficit of \$25,454.89 was found at the time of his death."

No matter what his intent, the treasurer was certainly very loose in his methods and had a strange misconception of the sacredness of a public trust. It is distressing that a county treasurer, the custodian of the people's money, should have handled the fund precisely as though it had been his own, using some of it in his private business, lending various sums to individuals upon his own responsibility, and appropriating the interest on bank balances to his own use. Yet, the grand jury is of opinion that he thought he was acting within his lawful rights. It is amazing that a man of Mr. Todd's sense and character should have taken such a view.

But Henrico has had her lesson and the treasurer should now be fully impressed with the fact that the money paid into his office is a trust fund and that he has no legal or moral right to use a cent of it, in excess of his commissions, for himself or his friends, or for any purpose save as the law provides.

The grand jury recommends that "the Board of Supervisors of the county employ, as he authorized and directed to employ, a competent expert to install a system of accounts and methods for the conduct of every detail of the treasurer's office, and that they also provide for a thorough auditing of said office two or more times a year, at irregular periods, with a view to preventing, as far as possible, the use of public funds, in whole or part, for any other purpose than that to which they belong."

That is a good recommendation as far as it goes. But the treasurer should be required to deposit the money in bank as fast as it is collected and it should not be paid out except upon warrant. We commend to the Henrico authorities the system in operation in Richmond.

Lynchburg's Story.

The Lynchburg News makes kindly reference to a recent article in The Times-Dispatch on town building and employs it as a text for an article on Lynchburg's wealth and progress. The conclusion reached by The Times-Dispatch was that Richmond's prosperity was derived from the shop. The News concurs and reminds us that recently had occasion to refer to Lynchburg's status as a manufacturing city, by way of explaining why it is many of its Virginia contemporaries has seemed inexplicable.

"In the matter of personally wealth," proceeds our contemporary, "the figures in the auditor's office show that Lynchburg stands second in the list of Virginia cities. That exhibit was recently characterized by the Richmond Times-Dispatch as absurd, and in answering our contemporary, we called attention to the fact that exclusive of Richmond, Lynchburg is not only the largest city in Virginia, but well tripled her nearest competitors in this respect. Here is the table then presented:

| | Manufactured output |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Lynchburg..... | \$13,521,000 |
| 2. Norfolk..... | 5,900,129 |
| 3. Petersburg..... | 5,880,574 |
| 4. Roanoke..... | 5,544,507 |

Now, reasons the News, if manufacture is wealth, it is perfectly logical that Lynchburg should list more personal property than Norfolk, Petersburg or Roanoke.

"It is essentially gratifying to know," adds our complacent contemporary, "that hereafter, when asserting this position we can refer to the Richmond Times-Dispatch as sustaining authority—and we but only lend her sister Virginia cities in manufactured output; but well tripled her nearest competitors in this respect. Here is the table then presented:

Point with pride as much as you please to our columns. We concede to Lynchburg all the glory that belongs to her. "Sir, we claim a part of that glory." But the fact remains that our assessment system is absurd.

Gorky.

In the remarkable outburst of emotion with which Maxim Gorky was greeted on his arrival in this country, it was plain that the artist and the man of letters was wholly lost sight of in the revolutionist, the liberator and the peasant spokesman. The eager men and women who thronged round him with hearts stirred to tears did so because they saw in him one who had labored and suffered much that his country might be free.

Americans generally will no doubt receive him in much the same way. Unselfish devotion to a high cause strikes deeper and quicker than mere gifts, however shining, and patriotic fervor probably will always make a special appeal to this country. Gorky came out of the people, from the far under side of society. What they have suffered, he has suffered. "I have come from below," he once wrote, "from the very depths of life, where there is naught but slum and slush." The way up was a hard and long one, but he emerged from it at last, lifted by the force of his own genius. The cry of those hopeless ones whom he left behind, however, has never died out of his ears. So he writes and works with his face turned toward a future, when the sudden misery of Russian peasant life, as none has known it better than he, may become some day a brighter and better thing.

Gorky's mission here is variously explained. A special to The Times-Dispatch yesterday stated that he had come simply in quest of health. The commoner understanding, however, is that he is here to interest Americans in the projected Russian revolution. Nothing, he says, is to be expected of the Duma, and nothing of a revolution not backed with arms. He comes thus as the voice of the newer party, which believes that the time for half-way measures is definitely past. Even where the ideas of his party for carrying out this programme seem impractical to Americans, Gorky will be everywhere received with the tributes due

his courage, his genius and his love of country and his fellow-man.

Richmond is to be congratulated upon having such a public-spirited and philanthropic citizen as John P. Branch. He has offered to donate \$25,000 for the erection of public baths on condition that the city will guarantee their maintenance. It is risky, nothing to predict the donation will be accepted with thanks.—Norfolk Virginian-Pilot.

We believe that there is no city in the country whose rich men are more public spirited than those of Richmond. It is the fashion here.

F. Marion Crawford has been reporting the Vesuvius eruption for the enterprising American press. This has necessarily interfered with his literary duties to such an extent that it is doubtful if he can write a novel this week.

Henry James complains that he is a "frustrated American." We don't know exactly what kind of American that is, but we are willing to place a small wager that it is better than being the ordinary trust-rated sort.

The published observations of that Atlanta lady are such as to make Mr. Carnegie devoutly wish he were even as Gladston Dowie, the great unkindled.

The strangest thing about the rate bill, however, is that the more it is explained the harder it becomes to understand.

Dowie's advertising is costing him nothing at all, which is just about what that kind is worth.

The Dowies continue to talk about each other's little failings with the most engaging candor.

The threats of a coal strike, however, will not command much Neapolitan interest just now.

The eruption in the Senate shows no sign of subsiding.

Who's whose on the rate question?

Millinery makes the money go.

It's the lily's busy season.

Rhymes for To-Day

The Trouble With Spring.

Spring is a season I like all right,
It's fine for a motor or bike, all right,
And grand for a stroll down the pike all right,
Or a seat in the cooling shade;
But it has one fault, I regret to say,
Which poets of April have yet to say,
And now I regret to be let to say,
Just how this fault is displayed.

For spring is a season when all of us,
The stout and the stout and the small of us,
The average-sized and the tall of us,
Should drop our labors and shirk—
Should saunter out doors and ramble round,
And wander and stroll and scramble round,
Cavort and frolic and gambol round,
With never a thought of work.

Four seasons—and spring is the best of them,
With most of the fun and the zest of them,
And yet—ah, it's just like the rest of them,
I haven't stop working and shirk;
And I never get out to play about
Or tramp or cavort or shirk about
Come to my office and I stay about
All day, and I work and I work.
H. S. H.

Merely Joking.

Pleasant—"Does your rheumatism bother you much?" "It should say it did. Every time I meet asks questions about it."—Cleveland Leader.

When Would He Pay Up?—The Lender: "All right, I'll lend you \$5, but don't forget that you owe it to me." The Borrower: "My dear fellow, I shall never forget it as long as I live."—Brooklyn Life.

The Lawyer's Way—The Friend: "There'll be something in the case for you, I suppose?" The Lawyer: "This isn't exactly professional, but I'm free to observe that there'll be nothing in it for anybody else."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Very Light—[Geoff.] Some of these roustabouts are strong. See how easily that fellow raises that barrel of buckwheat flour." That's no trouble. That's self-raising buckwheat."—Cleveland Leader.

Suburban Troubles—The Secretary: "I find that your property is in Swampville. You own your dollar a foot, sir. What price are you willing to sell it for?" The Rich Victim: "Oh, I'll let it go for two dollars a gallon."—Life.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

April 13th.

1804—Makoy, a Malay settlement on the coast of Sumatra, destroyed by the British.

1805—Lord Nelson's squadron arrived at Palermo in pursuit of the French.

1813—Battle of Castalla, in Spain; the British, under Sir John Murray, defeated the French, under Suchet.

1832—President Jackson, at a public dinner in Washington, gave the following toast: "Our Federal Union, it must be preserved." Vice-President Calhoun responded: "Liberty, dearer than Union."

1854—Four hundred Chinese coolies arrived at Havana, Cuba, as an experiment in the development of the island's plantations.

1856—Philadelphia visited by a tornado; 150 houses unroofed.

1861—The bombardment of Fort Sumter continued. Early in the day the officers' quarters were fired by a shell; by noon most of the woodwork was on fire. Sumter's fire was almost silenced, when General Wigfall came with a flag of truce, and arrangements were made for evacuating the fort. The terms were that the garrison should take all its individual and company property; that they should march out with their side arms in their own way, at their own time and that they should salute their flag and take it with them.

1865—The War Department decided to stop drafting and recruiting and the purchasing of munitions of war.

1894—The Democratic House of Representatives after criticizing Speaker Thomas Reed's "Czar" rules, adopted his method of counting a quorum.

1925—Alton B. Parker, at Jefferson dinner in New York, denounced "fads in politics," opposed national regulation of railroads, municipal ownership of utilities, etc.

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THE PRESBYTERY OF EAST HANOVER

Two New Churches—To Meet Again in Richmond June 4th.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

FREDERICKSBURG, VA., April 12.—At the last day's session of East Hanover Presbytery the moderator, Dr. Winn, was too much indisposed to be present, so Dr. Smith was elected temporary moderator.

The organization of two new churches was reported, one, the Bolt Memorial Church, at De Witt, and the other, the Hawkins Memorial Church, near Ford's, in Dinwiddie county.

Rev. L. B. Scott, with Rev. Dr. P. T. McFadden as alternate, was appointed to preach the doctrinal sermon at the fall meeting of Presbytery, which will be held at Concord Church, in Brunswick county, October 9, 1906.

Westminster Church, Richmond, was authorized to continue its present arrangement with Rev. Dr. P. T. McFadden as stated clerk.

Rev. William S. Campbell made an address on the work of the Bible Society of Virginia, in which he said that the last year had been the best year the society had had for a long time.

Contributions received had been \$4,400, to they were only \$2,800 the year before.

The work on systematic benevolence was presented by Rev. William S. Campbell, which showed an increase of more than \$5,000 over the preceding year.

The report on Sunday schools, presented by Rev. J. S. Foster, showed that the number of schools is 41, officers and teachers, 518; scholars, 3,846; scholars received into full communion of the church, 122; contributions, \$3,839.

The statistical report, presented by Rev. Dr. P. T. McFadden, the stated clerk, showed the following facts about the churches of the Presbytery: There are 35 churches. They have 143 ruling elders, 171 deacons and 5,887 members. There were added to these churches during the year on profession of faith in Christ 326 new members and 219 converts.

The average-sized and the tall of us, should drop our labors and shirk—Should saunter out doors and ramble round, And wander and stroll and scramble round, Cavort and frolic and gambol round, With never a thought of work.

For spring is a season when all of us, The stout and the stout and the small of us, The average-sized and the tall of us, Should drop our labors and shirk—Should saunter out doors and ramble round, And wander and stroll and scramble round, Cavort and frolic and gambol round, With never a thought of work.

Four seasons—and spring is the best of them, With most of the fun and the zest of them, And yet—ah, it's just like the rest of them, I haven't stop working and shirk; And I never get out to play about Or tramp or cavort or shirk about Come to my office and I stay about All day, and I work and I work.

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CHARLES BOWEN GIVEN A CHANCE

A Third Conviction Would Mean Life Sentence and the Doubt Was Put to His Credit.

WALTER EYLER ACQUITTED

A Youth Goes Free in the Face of What at First Seemed Conclusive Testimony

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

CHESTERFIELD, VA., April 12.—In the Circuit Court to-day the jury disposed of two colored criminals by sending Thomas Jackson to the penitentiary for three years for bigamy, and Thomas Choath to jail for six months for housebreaking.

Some sympathy was expressed for Jackson by several white citizens, as he had applied for divorce from his first wife before securing license to marry the second, and seemed to have the impression that that entitled him to a new trial, though the case was still pending.

He, however, represented himself to the clerk as being a widower.

There will be no further court till Tuesday of next week.

Charles E. Bowen, of Swansboro, was yesterday tried on the charge of highway robbery in violating the act against Gertrude Huby, near his town, in November of last year. The same case was tried in February, the jury failing then to agree, and yesterday there was a like result.

The prisoner has heretofore served two terms in the penitentiary on convictions for grand larceny, and another sentence to the same prison would carry with it a life term there.

This fact was brought out in the evidence and argument, which probably increased the desire of those who held his fate in hand, to give him the benefit of every possible doubt. The jury stood seven to five for conviction.

Wills of Jacob Fraker, Willis T. Bailey, Louisa E. Carroll and R. D. Crockett have been probated this week, and administrations granted on the estates of James H. Bailey, Lawson Morrisett and J. Paul Jones, involving in the aggregate property valued at \$35,000.

The will of R. D. Crockett is unique, being a joint will of himself and his wife. The wife being still living, the will was probated only as to the husband.

It appears that the selection of a supervisor for Clover Hill District to succeed into J. H. Bailey lies between J. A. Sallo, of Hillsboro, and Ellis Martin, of Wintercock.

Mr. H. A. Wells has located his saw mill plant on the Krause farm, adjoining the court-house grounds, to which a bathing mill has been attached.

Charged with carrying a stay bolt from a switch of the Farmville and Powhatan Railroad a year ago, with malicious intent against Fireman W. C. Womack, and derailing a freight train, young Walter Eyer was tried here Tuesday and acquitted.

The youth was arrested by J. D. Copeland, a Baldwin detective of Roanoke, employed by the railroad company, who after gaining his confidence under pretext of wanting samples of sand and clay for a Northern firm, elicited from him a confession that he purposely caused the wreck. This confession he later repeated in the hearing of concealed witnesses. Other facts, including the tracks of rubber shoes corresponding with those seen on the prisoner, were brought out by the Commonwealth, substantiating the detective's testimony.</